

***LBI announces LCBGP award to the Northeast Educational Development Foundation  
(March 28, 2012)***

The Louisiana Division of Administration (DOA) has announced its Louisiana Communities Broadband Grant Program (LCBGP) award to the Northeast Educational Development Foundation (NEED) of Oak Grove for its “Connecting Carroll – Bridging the Digital Divide in the Louisiana Delta” project.

The NEED Foundation is a private, non-profit, company that has a long history of providing educational programs in the West Carroll Parish area to youth and adults through various community events held at the Thomas Jason Lingo Community Center in Oak Grove, Louisiana. The goals of this project will be focused on engaging West Carroll Parish entrepreneurs through the creation of the Bricks-to-Clicks (BTC) Club. The BTC Club will have 25 entrepreneurs who receive broadband and e-Business training, as well as direct technical assistance that will result in the design, build, and launch of their business websites and social media accounts.

Specifically, the project will provide for:

- Conducting a Local Broadband Survey
- Designing / presenting a Broadband Education and Training Program, based on the findings of the Local Broadband Survey and determined by the members of the Local Advisory Council engaged for the project by NEED
- Training and providing technical assistance to the members of the BTC Club towards the launch of small business websites and social media accounts.

LCBGP is a technical assistance program that is designed to fund broadband-related planning and demonstration projects among rural communities that are un-served or underserved by commercial broadband providers. LCBGP is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and requires a 20% project grantee match through cash and/or in-kind contributions.

“We are excited to partner with the NEED Foundation on this program,” said Brad Smith, the State Broadband Grant Program Analyst. “Through its broadband education and training program, the members of the Bricks-to-Clicks Club will launch websites for their small businesses, bringing widespread, sustained e-commerce to West Carroll Parish for the first time.”

This is the fourth award made through the LCBGP, since the program’s inception late last year. LBI staff anticipates making several additional awards in the coming weeks and look forward to partnering with award recipients to the benefit of the citizens of the targeted communities.